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ABSTRACT

Since reading and language lie in the behavioral domain of the English teacher, he must be a teacher of reading and know how to perform the following five language tasks: (1) present the code-breaking skills needed to change written symbols into spoken language; (2) produce a wide variety of reading materials on useful topics and record and control the time spent on reading in these topics; (3) prepare and make available syntactically and lexically different versions of materials written on a variety of useful topics and provide learning activities to increase the linguistic awareness of readers; (4) provide clues and learning activities to encourage and evaluate comprehension of materials and linguistic awareness of readers; and (5) provide learning activities which afford the reader creative and critical responses in oral and written language to the reading materials. (LL)

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WHAT THE ENGLISH TEACHER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TEACHING READING

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Twenty million illiterate or semi-literate persons in the United States is about 10% of the population (Diederich, 1973). There is a reading problem in the United States; telling teachers that "reading is complex," or "that everyone can read better," or that "to read well, a person must want to read," or that "many teachers share in the responsibility for improving reading," or that "there is no single right way to teach reading" (Hook, 1965) does not tell the teacher of English what has to be done to teach a person who does not know how to read, how to read.

The communications model for the teaching of English includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing as its descriptors. The content model for the teaching of English includes literature, language, and composition as its descriptors. I would like to pull one descriptor from each mode, reading from the communications model, and language from the content model and to show how both of these descriptors lie in the behavioral domain of the teacher of English.

A dictionary definition of reading implies a number of interfaces of reading which can help answer the question, "What does a person have to do to read the printed page." The five interfaces of the reading process include: 1) the written or printed materials prepared for reading; 2) the extent of material read and the time involved in the reading; 3) the particular version of the reading; 4) the data indicated by the reading of the written material; and 5) the particular interpretation of the reading. A person involved in the reading process must be aware of these interfaces and he must be able to handle these interfaces of the reading processes as follows:

1. A reader must be able to transform the symbols on the printed page into language mediated through either the oral or the inner voice.
2. A reader must be able to do Step 1 above so that he can get a reliable amount of the message in an appropriate period of time.
3. A reader must be able to read a syntactically and lexically approximate version of the message.
4. A reader must be able to relate and to use the data included in the written materials.

CS 200 758

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5. A reader must be able to bring an interpretation of the data to his reading.

In order to teach to these learner behaviors, the teacher must be able to do the following:

1. Present the code-breaking skills needed to change written symbols into spoken language.
2. Produce a wide variety of reading materials on useful topics; record and control the time spent on reading in these topics.
3. Prepare and make available syntactically and lexically different versions of materials written on a variety of useful topics. Provide learning activities to increase linguistic awareness of readers.
4. Provide clues and learning activities to encourage and evaluate comprehension of materials and linguistic awareness of readers.
5. Provide learning activities which afford the reader creative and critical responses in oral and written language to the reading materials.

It is interesting to notice that all of the tasks which a teacher must be able to perform in order to teach youths how to read are language teaching tasks on the part of the teacher and language learning activities for the student. The teaching of language is the responsibility of the teacher of English as we have seen from the content model for the teaching of English. No one in the secondary schools is as well prepared to teach language as is the teacher of English. The teacher of English must be a teacher of reading and must know how to perform the above mentioned five tasks. Let's discuss what the teacher of English must know in order to accomplish these reading teaching tasks in the secondary school English classroom.

Task 1: Present the code-breaking skills needed to change written symbols into spoken language.

When asked to correct a student's spelling on the written page, secondary school teachers of English will approach the task with full gusto, yet they will rebel at the notion of teaching these same students how to pronounce words correctly spelled on the written page. The chief handicap of the high school

pupil retarded in reading skills is his inability to interpret the printed word symbols. High school spellers are abundant, but high school texts containing materials to aid in word recognition and understanding are difficult to find. It is not possible for a high school student to gain comprehension from the printed page until he has mastered these word recognition skills.

Learning to spell and learning word recognition skills call for two mirror image types of activities. Learning to spell is a guessing game which matches sounds to likely written symbols. The chances of spelling a word correctly without having seen it, and learned its "acceptable" spelling are slim. Learning to read is a guessing game which matches written symbols to likely oral sounds. The chances of calling the likely word from the written symbols are far greater than writing the symbols from the sound of the word. Yet, students who do not know some techniques for word recognition, will not gain this skill without direct instruction. A method for teaching word recognition skills should be as readily accessible to the high school teacher of English as is a method for teaching spelling.

Since the basic reading activity, word recognition, is a guessing game (Goodman, 1970), the teacher's task is to show students how to do this kind of guessing with maximum efficiency. First, the teacher of English must provide the student with linguistic awareness (Mattingly, 1972) for approaching this guessing game.

A secondary or an intermediate school student who is having difficulty with code-breaking, that is word-recognition skills, can profit from instruction in written symbol-to-sound, grapheme-phoneme, correspondences. A successful way to start this kind of instruction is to teach these students a phonemic alphabet and to provide transliteration activities for them. The value of such a period of instruction is that it provides the student with the awareness that there are discrete sounds which form English words and that these sounds can be written down with a consistent symbol system. Both i.t.a., the initial teaching alphabet, and the Trager and Smith phonemic alphabet have been used for this initial code-breaking procedure. This instruction should be limited to a 10-15 minute period for not more than a month. Students should use these alphabets in game-like ways, the way youngsters like to deal with secret codes and puzzles.

The main stumbling block in this type of code-breaking instruction is the teacher. The teacher must learn the phonemic alphabet, either i.t.a. or Trager and Smith, so that he is comfortable with the procedure. The teacher must also be flexible about seeing phonemic spellings which represent the students' dialect. At the CAI Laboratory at The Pennsylvania State University, we have a computer-assisted i.t.a. program for teachers which can be accomplished in about 1.5 to 2.5 instructional hours. At the completion of the program the teacher will know i.t.a., have had transliteration experience, and will have some ideas of how it can be used in elementary, secondary, and adult English classes. Research substantiating this procedure can be found in a report by Downing (1967). The author will provide an i.t.a. handbook for teachers and students upon request.

After the initial phonemic code-breaking activities with a phonemic alphabet, the teacher must turn the student's attention to corresponding activities using traditional orthography, T.O. The purpose of an alphabet is to reflect the sound system of a language in some systematic way. English has been considered an abomination in that respect. Recent research by Venezky (1970) and Hanna, Hanna, Hodges, and Rudorf (1966) have forced us to conclude that very few words in English are aphonemic. Even words like paradigm, damn, and bomb have a use for the silent letters g, n, and b respectively. Their need is demonstrated by the pronunciation and spelling of paradigmatic, damnation, and bombard. The ff in giraffe are absolutely necessary to prevent the reader from pronouncing the word /jəreyf/. The i after the g in that same word tells the reader that the g is pronounced /j/ and not /g/. Traditional English orthography is a near optimal system designed for readers who know the language and for spellers who have a judge such as a dictionary to arbitrate multiple possible choices. The teacher can complement reading instruction with spelling instruction by transliterating from the sound of words to their T.O. representation (spelling) and from the T.O. representation to the sound. Some special procedures for this type of transliteration are possible.

Since the students have previously worked with a phonemic alphabet such as i.t.a., or the Trager and Smith alphabet, they do not have to go through the sounds and symbol representation of the consonants and consonant blends since

they are generally the same in both T.O. and the phonemic alphabets. A quick review of these consonants and consonant blends can also cover the digraphs ch, ch+r, sh, ck, th, ph, wh, gh, ng, and qu. Here are some sample words for these digraphs:

ch	ch+r	sh	th
chuckle	Christmas	shave	thick
chicken	chromatic	shawl	bath
catch	Chrysler	shield	thistle
wretched	chrysanthemum	shiver	bathe
poacher	chromite	gash	clothe
latchet	chronological	swish	cloth
watchful	chrysalis	distinguish	breath
mischief	chrism	astonishment	breathe
luncheon	chromium	bushel	author
sketchbook	chromosome	threshold	heathen

ph	wh	gh	ng	qu
phone	whiff	laugh	sling	quack
physics	whale	rough	fling	quart
pharmacy	wheeze	trough	bang	quote
Joseph	whim	enough	strong	quaint
paragraph	whine	ought	anger	quadruped
nephew	wheat	weight	tangle	quintet
siphon	whether	bought	wrangle	equal
alphabet	wharf	plight	finger	squeeze
prophecy	whisper	fraught	shingle	squadron
sophomore	whet	freight	language	soliloquy

Vowel sounds and their equivalent written symbols can be taught in pairs wherever possible:

/ey/, long A	/ae/, short A
shape	cash
paper	plank
rain	tassel
gravy	sand
tame	chapter
native	magnet
paint	wagon
cave	plant
navy	saddle
trace	tack
/iy/, long E	**/e/, short E**
cream	credit
feast	vest
equal	pedal
seat	shed
plead	flesh
legal	echo
demon	dent
leaf	seldom
field	lesson
team	penny
/o/, long O	**/a/, short O**
note	pocket
float	tonsil
stone	soft
clover	frog
coach	dollar
roust	hobby
scold	pond
bold	blot
blow	proper

/yuw/, long U	/ə/, short U, shwa	
music	lunch	pedestal
Tuesday	rustle	vitality
mule	bunc	carnival
lunatic	plus	nativity
mucilage	custom	benefit
duke	number	republican
tune	bucket	ivory
unity	husband	horizon
fume	rubber	opponent
tulip	gulf	microscope

/uw/, long OO	/u/, short OO
droop	took
cool	wool
tooth	look
goose	cook
soon	soot
broom	nook
loop	brook
proof	stood
food	crook
sloop	good

Secondary school students generally do not need an extensive period of time with this kind of code-breaking activity; 10-15 minutes a day for a month will suffice for the "awareness" period. Roberts (1956) has produced a handy teacher's guide for secondary school teachers of English in the area of teaching word recognition skills.

Task 2: Produce a wide variety of reading materials on useful topics; record and control the time spent on reading in these topics.

The tastes of contemporary America vary more than the teacher of English is willing to admit. The "me-too" characteristic of human nature is likely to

be accompanied by the "you-too" characteristic. The teacher of English who has grown up reading and liking the books appearing on college department of English reading lists is naturally going to assume that "you-too" are going to like what he likes; and besides, it will bring the students "culture" that they would not have if the teacher were not there to give it to them. Such prevailing attitudes have been and still are disastrous to secondary school literature and reading programs, as is the other extreme which assumes, for example, that all black children need to have an intellectual reading experience with the switch-blade knife.

The teacher of English who is attempting to meet the reading needs of students is obliged to determine the tastes of the students and to provide them with non-compromising materials of interest to the students (Paul, 1972). If the materials interest the students and have a purpose in the students' intellectual development, then they will be able to read materials written with almost any level of difficulty. A Tale of Two Cities written down to the third grade level is a compromising "talk-down" to students which students are quick to detect.

A simple method of detecting students' tastes, what they like to do, is needed by all teachers of English. Not only will such an inventory help teachers of English select reading materials for students, it will also help the teacher shape composition materials for students. In the Computer Assisted Literacy Program for Career-oriented Youth at Penn State we have programed a task interest inventory which presents about 10 tasks from about 150 tasks at a time. With each set the student indicates which ones he likes to do. Upon having gone through the 150 tasks once this way, he is then asked to select from the tasks he liked to do, those which he liked most to do. After completion of this activity, his feedback is a series of statements such as: "You seem to like adventuresome work, particularly work related to the sea or mining," or "You are interested in the out-of-doors, particularly trucking or farming," or "You are interested in working with people, particularly in social situations such as counselling or receptionist." After the reader gets these statements he then receives a list of reading materials available under each category of task preference statement. The student makes his choice and he is then on his

way to reading what suits his needs and tastes. Although computers are not available to everyone, it is only the delivery system for a carefully planned reading program originally done in soft copy by a group of English teachers interested in such a procedure. It must be mentioned that a reading ability test also accompanies the task interest inventory so that the reading materials selected for the student are also within the range of his reading ability. With periodic testing, students are always reading at their optimal level and in areas of their own interest choice. But what about the student who wants to read about nothing but tulips? And what is wrong with this. We need only to look at mass media to see that general interest programs on TV and general interest magazines have become almost nonexistent. Even daily newspapers appeal to specific needs and interests of readers.

The teacher of English must also provide reading time in class for students when both students and teachers can read without the noise and interruption of TV and the huddled masses. During these reading periods, students can learn that as they read for different purposes their reading time can change and that indeed by forcing themselves to read more rapidly they might even understand more than if they read slowly. Margaret Meed told English teachers at the NCTE (Minneapolis, 1972) a shocking fact which I hope these teachers heard, that we, teachers of English, cannot assume that today's children will read a book the way yesterday's children did, savoring the mental images invoked by the printed word. Today's children are bombarded by images created for them by TV, movies, and photography. They no longer need employ mutual time and effort for this image making, reading operation. On the other hand, a student who has watched the five episodes of Tom Brown's School Days on TV does not come to the novel totally unfamiliar with it the way I did when I first read it. We might even wonder whether a student exposed to such a presentation in his own home might need read the novel at all. The teacher of English might help him find other materials to read.

Task 3: Prepare and make available syntactically and lexically different versions of materials written on a variety of useful topics. Provide learning activities to increase linguistic awareness of readers.

Syntactic density and vocabulary intensity are the two features next to interest and conceptual level of the materials which contribute to reading difficulty. Assuming that the teacher of English has met the interest and conceptual levels of students in Task 2, the problem for the teacher now is to match the students' reading ability with the syntactic density and vocabulary intensity of the material to be read.

The most common way for an English teacher to assertain the reading level of students is to go to the office file and to look for a grade level reading score on the student's permanent record. This information is usually very disturbing. John is now in the tenth grade. His permanent record shows that he was given a reading test when he entered junior high school at which time he showed a grade level score of 4.5 on comprehension. What is his reading ability today? The teacher of English needs quick and reliable information on a student's reading ability. An Informal Reading Inventory, IRI, (Marksheffe, 1966) constructed by the teacher might be more satisfactory than most standardized grade level tests. Procedures for construction of an IRI follow:

1. Select two 400-500 word passages from literature and essays, which are at known reading difficulty. If the level of difficulty is unknown, the scales devised by Koenke (1971) can be used for determining difficulty level. Only two bits of information are needed: first, the number of words not on the Dale list of 3,000 words, and second, the number of complete sentences in a 100 word sample. By placing a straight-edge onto Koenke's scales, the grade level can be extracted immediately. This author has an unpublished syntactic density formula which can also be used to determine the grade level difficulty of texts.
2. Develop ten questions for each passage. Questions should be presented in order consistent with the text. One-third of the questions should be fact questions, one-third vocabulary and language skill questions, and one-third problem-solving, generalization, or inferencial questions. For later diagnostic purposes, questions can be coded (F) for fact, (V) for vocabulary, and (I) for inference.

3. These selections are put in a notebook. The question sheets are handy for students use. The student is given directions with the reading samples and the test/answer sheets. At least one of the selections is read aloud to detect word recognition problems. The passage in which a student obtains a 75% or better score on the questions will indicate the instructional reading level of that student. A student must also be able to recognize at least 96% of the words of that passage.

Another simple way of determining a student's independent reading level is to apply this author's syntactic density formula to a 500 word passage of the student's writing. The grade level of such a score will indicate an independent or at least difficult reading level of a student.

Once the teacher can easily determine the reading ability and the interest and cognitive level of each student, he can then match these facts to the syntactic density and lexical intensity of the reading materials. The procedure is not an easy one and will require patience and practice on the part of the teacher. It is best to try these techniques during the summer under the guidance of an experienced teacher. The skills gained in this kind of instruction will also help the teacher gain insights in rewriting interesting materials from magazines, manuals, and newspapers; not novels, poetry, and stories, which can develop into a large notebook of reading materials for all levels of difficulty.

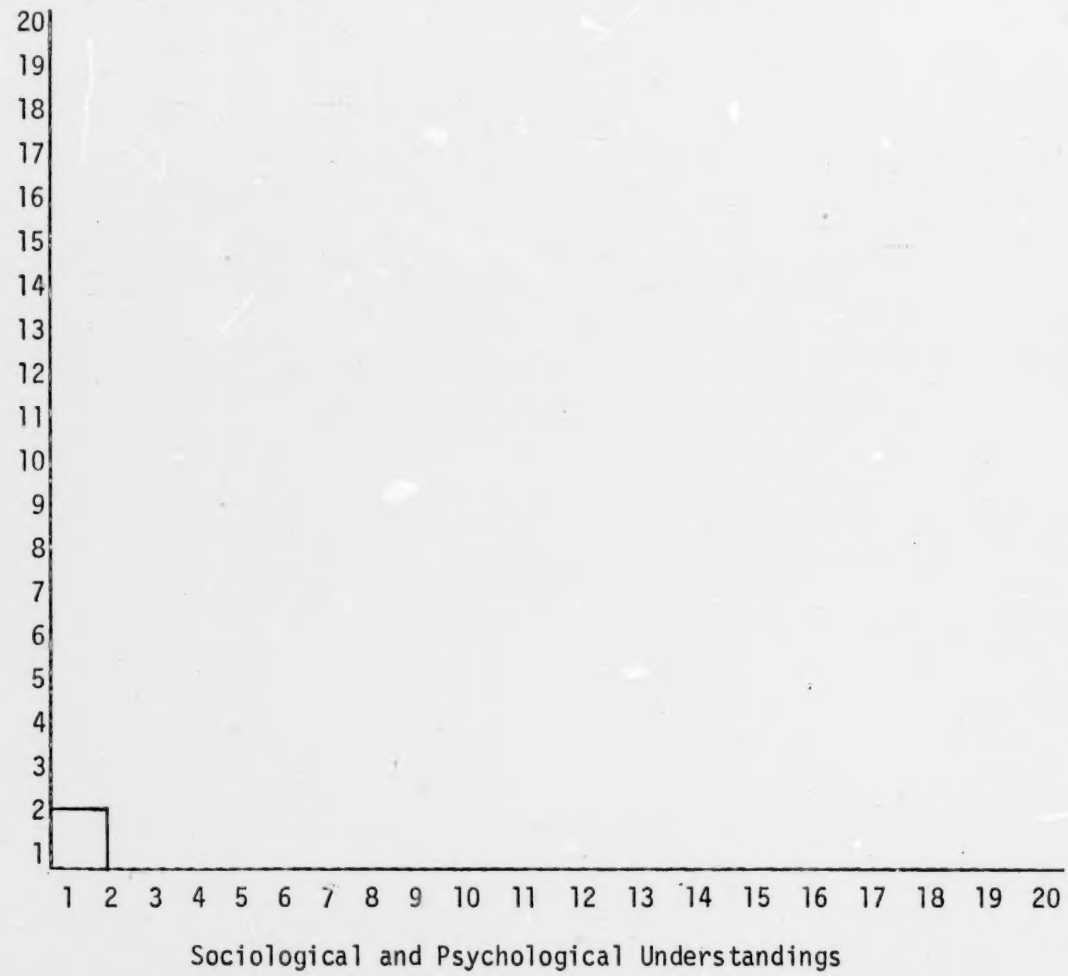
Task 4: Provide clues and learning activities to encourage and evaluate comprehension of materials and linguistic awareness of readers.

How to question a literary work or any reading material, for that matter, is the most important skill a teacher of English can teach students. This is not an easy skill to teach since it is best done through example rather than prescription. The teacher must be aware of the two levels of questioning possible. One level can best be called the comprehension (surface) level, and the other, the cognitive (deep) level.

The comprehension level contains the three types of questions mentioned in Task 4. These are: (F) Fact questions; for example, "On the Saturday afternoons during and after adolescence, what did Joe and his friends do?" (V) Vocabulary and language questions, for example, "Adolescence is a period between childhood

and young adult. A person in his adolescence is an _____?" (I) Inference or generalization question, for example, "'Joe saw girls only at church on Sunday. They were associated with Sunday and church.' Indicate the most likely answer. 1) Joe never talked to girls, 2) Joe would grow up hating women, or 3) Joe would grow to believe that all women were pure and religious."

None can deny that these three types of questions are important. But the teacher of English wants also to get to the cognitive level of a text. This level includes the literary considerations of a work as well as its sociological and psychological considerations. Questions can be formulated which will lead to cognitive understanding by placing literary concerns on one axis of a matrix and the sociological and psychological concerns on the other axis



Literary understandings can be listed as:

1. Style
2. Language and meaning
3. Characterization
4. Form
5. Meaning of content
6. Symbolism
7. Motivation
8. Nature of characters
9. Facts given
10. Facts implied
11. Ideas
12. Events
13. Places
14. People
15. Processes
16. Feeling
17. Behaviors
18. Absolute standards
19. Ambiguous standards
20. Dogmas

Sociological and psychological understandings can be listed as:

1. Changes in social ordering and events which affect individuals and groups.
2. Social dogmas which affect individuals and groups.
3. Social class structures and movability within structures.
4. Industrial progress influencing social and cultural change.
5. Ecological conditions influencing social and cultural change.
6. Acceptance or rejection of cultural and value differences.
7. Affect of communications and media on individuals and groups.
8. Social forces leading to appropriate or abnormal behavior.
9. Transmission of culture and values - group learning.
10. Methods of the social scientist

11. Factors involved in personality development such as personal identification and interpersonal relations.
12. Varying individual perceptions, that is, point of view and frame of reference.
13. The nature and effect of vicarious experience.
14. Man's motivations caused by physical and psychological needs.
15. Individual's responsibility toward another human individual.
16. Creative imagination and imitation as a means of self-expression.
17. The nature of emotions such as love, hate, fear, pleasure, anger, and anxiety.
18. Responsibility of choice, acts, and impulses.
19. Transmission of emotion and reason - individual learning.
20. Methods of the psychologist.

By using the matrix, questions can be devised for determing how a literary understanding and a sociological or psychological understanding can enhance the reader's response to the work. For example, "Faulkner names the character Hightower and uses words such as peaceful, benignant, and pontifical to describe him. What social dogmas would you suspect had influenced this character." The literary understanding is number 2, the sociological understanding is number 2. Although the method for questioning a literary work for its deep level of understanding seems somewhat mathematical with the use of the matrix, the author is indebted to Louis Rosenblatt (1938) for these conceptual insights.

Task 5: Provide learning activities which afford the reader creative and critical responses in oral and written language to the reading materials.

This task deals with implementing an English program in such a way that it is also a reading program. The teacher of English who has learned to perform the four previously mentioned tasks will be a person who can teach principles of English orthography as they apply to the written language system. This teacher will be able to assess the behavioral, understanding, and emotional interests of students and will be able to provide reading materials and reading

time to satisfy these interests. This teacher will also be able to match the syntactic and vocabulary difficulty of reading materials to the ability of the students. And this teacher will be able to help students question reading materials, a literary work, and an author in such a way that the questioning techniques will be usable long after the student leaves school.

The teacher of English who performs these tasks in the context of English is clearly not teaching English in the traditional sense of teaching language one day, a piece of literature another day, and composition another day. This approach demands groups of students and individual students reading different materials at their own interest and ability levels. No longer will a whole class of forty, tenth grade students with reading levels ranging from second to fourteenth grade ability all be reading or having read to them A Tale of Two Cities because it is our cultural heritage.

Students can still be reading world literature, approaches to genre, American literature and British literature. They can also be reading African literature, Chicano literature, literature of the Third World, Afro-American literature, and Amero-Indian literature. Students can also be reading materials related to career choices, sciences, social science, and ecology.

Discussion groups should be small. Five to ten students who have all read the same materials. Have answered the surface level (comprehension) type questions and are now ready to tackle the deep level (cognitive) questions in oral discussion in group interaction and finally to write their responses in a writing workshop where these responses can be read and discussed by students and teachers. An invaluable example of students writing about their reading of literature can be found in 12,000 Students and Their English Teachers (1968). A survey of research in response to literature can be found in Literature and the Reader (1972). Such a study implies that literature needs readers.

A teacher of English who can perform all five tasks and feel comfortable in doing them is certainly a Super Teacher. I suggest that we try not to become Super Teacher, but rather, approach one task at a time with patience and concern for youngsters who will have demands on their language and reading ability far different from those made on us. A repetorie of materials and techniques built around these five tasks will take years to develop and as these materials and techniques are being refined, more tasks will be added. As

we define our tasks as teachers of English, we cannot help but become better and wanted professionals. Certainly a teacher of the English language must be the best qualified person to teach people how to read that language.

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